



Finding Our Place

Virginia Tutor Collaboration Day 2023 (TuColla-VA)

Call for Proposals

Deadline: Monday, October 2

Conference: Saturday, November 11, 2022 (via Zoom)

Sponsored by the Virginia Network of the Southeastern Writing Center Association-Virginia (SWCA-VA)

Hosted by the William & Mary Writing Resources Center

The SWCA-VA invites writing center tutors to submit proposals for TuColla-VA 2023. The theme for this year's conference is "Finding Our Place."

The authors of the book *The Everyday Writing Center* (2007), identify writing centers as "communities of practice." Such communities form when members commit to common goals, engage in shared efforts and experiences, and feel empowered to be both teachers and learners who can shape and challenge the group's values and norms. Members of a community of practice feel invested in its success and see profound meaning in its work. Scholar Brooklyn Walter extends this point when she argues that, in order to effect positive social change in their institutions, writing centers must also become "critical communities" that "[cultivate] brave, bold, and creative work with student-writers." Critical communities are formed intentionally, with the goal of supporting and sustaining efforts at social change through appropriate guidance, strategies, motivation, and reflection.

At the 2023 Virginia Tutor Collaboration Day, we will focus on this idea of writing centers as intentional communities, as locations where individuals (both those who use our services and those who provide them) are invited to "find their place."

Our conference theme is purposefully broad in order to invite a range of session topics. Here are some ideas to spark your thinking:

- What role has the writing center played in your connection to your academic community? Has it changed your relationship with your institution, your intellectual pursuits, your plans for the future, or something else? Why do you think the writing center made this particular impact on you?
- What aspects of your writing center work do you most value, and why? Do you value the satisfaction you receive from helping others, the friendships you have made in the center, the skills you have learned and practiced, the creative challenge you face with each new session, or something else entirely?
- How does your writing center demonstrate its commitment to the various communities it serves? What role have you played in enacting, extending, or enhancing that commitment?
- Is your center facing an increase in usage, or disengagement and lowered participation? What are some strategies and ideas for improving writing center usage and/or broadening your community of writing center clients?
- What role does the physical space of your center play in your sense of connection to it? How do different members of your community use the space? How do they tend the space or make a mark on it? If your writing center is mobile or in a shared space, how does that affect the sense of community it engenders? If your writing center is online, how does a digital presence replace a physical one?
- Is your writing center primarily an intellectual space, a social space, an emotional space, or all of these? How can writing centers support the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of the individuals who use it?
- Who are the learners in your writing center, and who are the teachers? Are roles in your writing center fixed or mutable? How is teaching and learning negotiated in your center?
- Creating supportive, collaborative, and change-oriented learning environments in writing centers requires more than planning, commitment, focus, and effort -- it also requires a kind of work known as “emotional labor” (Mannon 2021). Does your writing center provide training and support for your emotional labor? How does the emotional work of writing center sessions change your relationship with the writing center or academic community?
- What effect does your emotional labor have on the individuals who come to you for writing support, or on the broader community?
- What is the role of listening -- active listening (in sessions, in community) -- as a means to deepen our understanding of our student clients and others? How can we become better not just at asking questions but at listening to the answers? How does active listening affect communities of practice and critical communities?

- What is the role of conversation--a key activity in writing centers--in building accessible, inclusive, welcoming, and resilient communities?
- While writing centers define themselves as inclusive communities--open to all--many scholars have argued that writing center values are implicitly exclusive. For example, the historical and ongoing commitment to teaching Standard Academic English often excludes or devalues language variations. What individuals or groups are excluded from the writing center community? What actions can writing centers take to become more inclusive?
- What will be the role or the place of the writing center in a world that relies increasingly upon generative artificial intelligence (AI)?

Presentation Formats

We invite proposals for sessions in the following formats:

- ❑ Individual presentation, which organizers will group together by related topics (3 separate presenters, 15 minutes each, 15 minutes for Q&A with all 3 presenters)
- ❑ Roundtable discussion (2-4 presenters who submit a proposal together) (1 hour)
- ❑ Workshop (2-4 facilitators who submit a proposal together; emphasizes participant interaction) (1 hour)
- ❑ Asynchronous presentation (video recording with slides)(1-3 presenters, up to 15 minutes)
- ❑ Digital poster session (developed by 1-3 presenters using slides, website, Canva, or Prezi)

Conference Links

Proposals are due Monday, October 2, 2023.

Submit a proposal:

[TuColla-VA 2023 Proposal Form](#)

Register for the conference:

[TuColla-VA 2023 Conference Registration Form](#)

NOTE: All members of a presentation group should register individually for the conference.

Tentative Conference Schedule:

10:00-11:00	Keynote
11:00-12:00	Session A
12:00-1:00	Lunch with Breakout Rooms in Zoom --with focus groups that allow for cross-institutional conversation
1:00-2:00	Session B
2:00-3:00	Session C
3:00-4:00	Q&A and Wrap-Up

Questions? Contact Lori Jacobson, TuColla 2023 organizer, SWCA Virginia State Representative: ljacobson@wm.edu

References:

Geller, Anne Ellen. et al. *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*. Utah State University Press, 2007.

Mannon, Bethany. "Centering the Emotional Labor of Writing Tutors." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 39, no. 1/2, 2021, pp. 143–68, <https://doi.org/10.7771/2832-9414.1962>.

Walter, Brooklyn. "Writing Centers as Critical Communities: Redesigning Community through Critical Dialogue, Rhetorical Listening, and the Critical Embrace." *The Peer Review* 6.1 (Winter 2022), <https://thepeerreview-iwca.org/issues/issue-6-1/writing-centers-as-critical-communities-redesigning-community-through-critical-dialogue-rhetorical-listening-and-the-critical-embrace/>